

The Baptist Record

Thursday, December 20, 1990

Navy family readies for Christmas apart

By Greg Warner and Jack Brymer

Two-year-old Gene Boyles wrapped up his favorite blanket and sent it overseas to his father for Christmas. This is the first time the boy will spend Christmas without his adoptive father, Jim Boyles, who is aboard the Navy carrier USS Saratoga somewhere off the Middle East.

"I didn't know he would miss Jim this much and understand so much," Hazel Boyles of Atlantic Beach, Fla., said of her son.

"Although he's only 2, he can say 'Saratoga,'" Hazel reported. "When we go on the (Mayport Navy) base or pass the ballfield, he wants to see his daddy. There are days that it's really hard. Even though he's only 2, he has his down days."

Although long tours at sea are nothing new for most Navy families, those tours are particularly tense and tearful this Christmas. The Saratoga and other Mayport-based ships are in the Middle East region in response to the Persian Gulf crisis.

"Christmas means togetherness," said Hazel, a member of Oak Harbor Church in Atlantic Beach. Yet togetherness is what Hazel said she will miss most this Christmas. "It's not complete without Jim."

Hazel and Jim have been married 10 years, all of which Jim has spent in the Navy. Although the couple was apart for one other Christmas, this is the first time since they adopted Gene that the family has been separated.

"I just miss Jim so much," Hazel said. "I feel like a single mother."

Jim Boyles, a boiler technician and 15-year Navy veteran, isn't due back before February, Hazel said, and it could be longer depending on how the

Gulf crisis unfolds.

To ease the pain, Hazel and her son will visit both her parents and Jim's during the Christmas holidays. She also will try to preserve as much of the meaning of Christmas as possible.

"We always try to celebrate what Christmas is all about, especially since we have had our son," she explained. "He already knows Christmas is Jesus' birthday."

With the help of church members, Hazel and Gene recorded a video of themselves to send — in addition to Gene's blanket — to Jim for Christmas.

Despite the difficulties of separation, Hazel said she has grown spiritually as a result. "Unfortunately, when we are down, we turn to the Lord more," she explained. Letters from her husband indicate he has noticed her spiritual growth, she said.

"He has also been reading his Bible more because of the situation," she added.

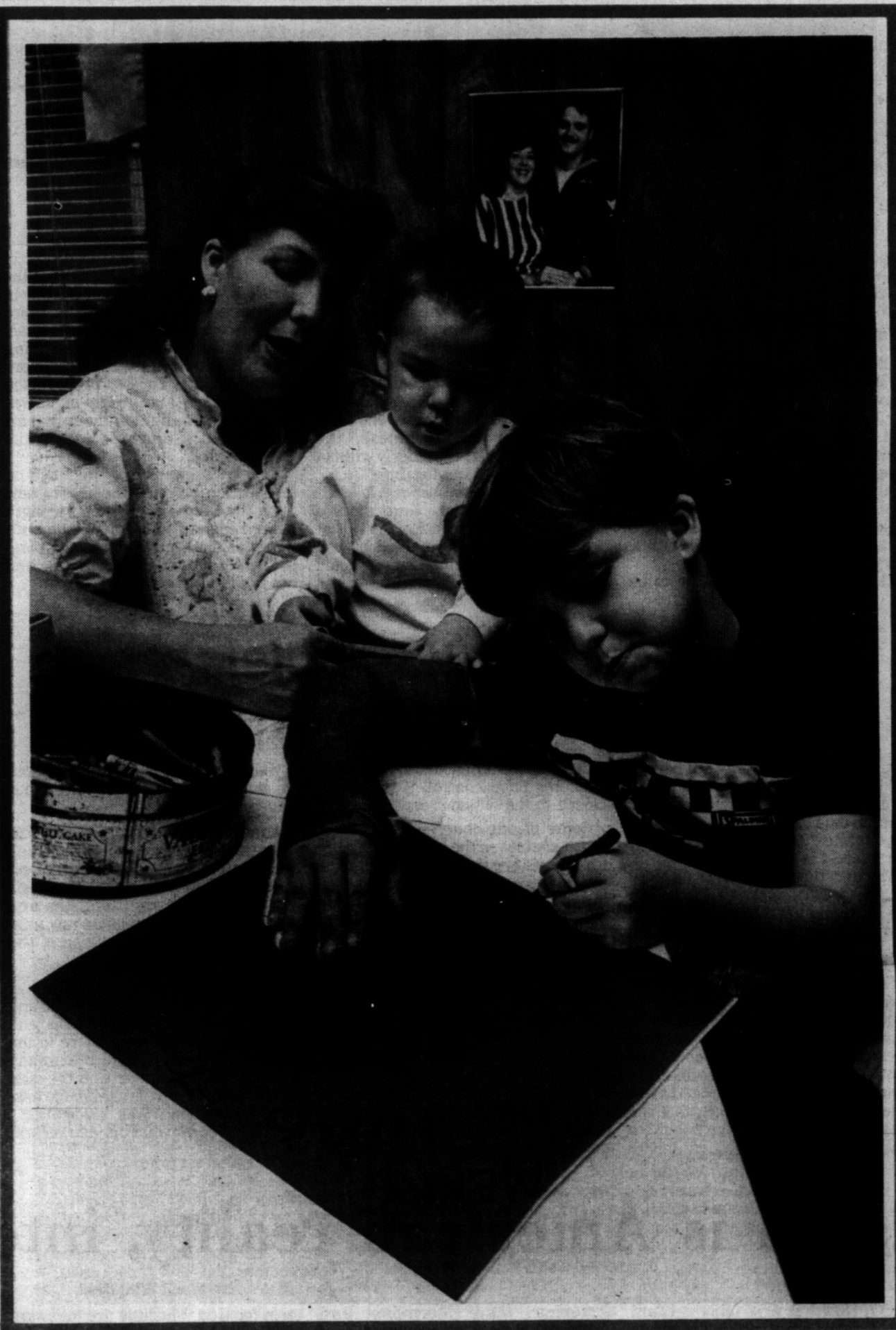
"Having God in your life is so important," she continued.

"I don't know what families do without him. I don't think I could make it."

Hazel, 39, said she and Jim, 36, rededicated their lives to Christ after their marriage 10 years ago. But then the strains of military life took a toll, she said. "I guess we drifted away."

Since moving to Florida from Norfolk, Va., three years ago, however, the Boyles have been seeking a closer relationship with Christ and the church, Hazel said. "The first thing we did was find a church home."

Oak Harbor Church is heavily influenced by the Navy. As the closest



Christmas, 1990

ATLANTIC BEACH, Fla. — As their mother Cyndi Duncan looked on, Tommy, 3 and Charlie, 6, drew a picture of their church. Oak Harbor Baptist Church in Atlantic Beach, Fla.,

to send as a Christmas present to their father, Randy Duncan, serving aboard the USS Supreme in the Mediterranean. John 16:33b (GNB) (BSSB photo by Jim Veneman)

Southern Baptist church to Mayport Naval Station, 55 percent of the church's 400 members are military related.

Navy families always live with the possibility "that loved ones might not come back," said Pastor Carroll Kendrick. One church member was among the 36 sailors killed in 1987 when an Iraqi missile hit the U.S.S. Stark in the Persian Gulf.

But the current threat of war makes those ever-present concerns more acute, Kendrick said. "People are praying with that in mind," he said. "It has brought about a camaraderie among (Navy) wives."

Church members also have responded, offering the families prayer and personal support, Kendrick said. At Wednesday night services, most of the time is spent shar-

ing and praying about the Gulf crisis. The church helped Navy families record videocassettes to send overseas for Christmas. And the congregation sponsors a monthly fellowship for Navy families. The crisis also has "colored my messages," Kendrick said.

"My sermons tilt toward God's comforting mercy . . . and reassurance," Hazel Boyles praised her pastor for the concern he has shown. "I love him with all my heart," she said. "He's a very gentle, intelligent, witty man (and) easy to talk to."

The support offered by Kendrick and Oak Harbor Church made it a little easier to send her husband out to sea, Hazel said.

"Jim left without fear" that his family would be cared for, she explained.

Hazel said she saw that care demonstrated several years ago when she underwent a series of major surgeries. Church members cared for her son, cooked and washed clothes. "It's a small church, but there's a lot of love and support."

Hazel said she writes letters to her husband almost every day, and several church members write him as well. But mail service is sporadic in both directions, she said. "Today I got three letters."

She said she hears little from her husband about the Middle East situation. She knows it is dangerous, but she is confident nonetheless.

"I know he's coming home. I just know he will."

Brymer is editor and Warner is associate editor, Florida Baptist Witness.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Joy to the world

I've observed Christmas celebrations in a number of countries and perhaps we do it better than some but worse than most. There may or may not be a correct way to celebrate the birth of Jesus but we have managed to inculcate some ways that are physically and spiritually damaging. "Ten shopping days 'til Christmas" is a standout illustration. Gifts are wonderful. We love to give and receive them. The wise men presented gifts to the child Jesus and from this a tradition was born. However, the tinsel, the tree, and the presents hardly account for the real Christmas story.

The rush season causes the calen-

dar to collapse from overload and we soon follow. Travel, crowded planes, children coming home, and schools are closed. We can't seem to slow down. Culture and tradition have bound us with the chains of conformity. This is great for the children, difficult for the parents, and the worst time of the year for those who have neither. For the homeless, the runaway kids, and the elderly without family, it's a traumatic time.

The circuits can be overloaded! Spiritual, physical, and mental breakdown can occur. How is it that we have become so molded by our society that the spiritual lift we should receive is sadly lacking? Our shopp-

ing expeditions, the sports display, the hustle and bustle will always be in December. For the Christian, there should be something better. Pause, reflect, meditate on the real meaning — "And thou, child . . . shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare the way; . . . to give knowledge of salvation . . . to give light to them that sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet in the way of peace."

Surely somewhere in such a celebration we should be able to wait upon the Lord and feel our strength being renewed and "mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

The Persian Gulf, Islam, and the Apocalypse

A hundred drums may not hold all the ink that has been used in the last six months describing what is taking place in the Persian Gulf. Now that we have upward of 400,000 troops there, the interest is acute.

The questions proliferate like kudzu. Are we in the last days? Is not this the fulfillment of biblical prophecy? Armageddon, according to those who are smarter than the angels (Mark 13:32), is just around the corner.

There is growing resentment on what our troops can or cannot do in Saudi Arabia. Reportedly chaplains cannot wear the cross on their uniforms and must be called "counselors." Bibles cannot be distributed even to American troops unless they are sent directly to an individual. The Saudis have built a fence of cultural and religious blocks

to hem in the Americans. Whenever Moslems have control, it is usually closed to the outside world.

Some of our churches are giving crash courses in the Islamic religion. Christians are interested in witnessing to Moslem friends. There are 950 million Moslems in the world today with the radical Shiite group making up about 10 percent of the total.

Islam is trying hard to change its image and is pouring huge amounts of money into the West seeking to expand its influence in the world. However, in nations where they are in control, opposition is brutally oppressed. The persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt testify of this.

Communism operated for years under the proverb, "When you are in power, you must tolerate us, for that

is your system; when we attain power, we shall destroy you, for that is our system."

America has opened her doors to their missionary activities and they are granted complete freedom of expression. Yet they persecute their own people who are Christians and place many restrictions on our missionaries. It is still a religion of the sword in certain areas.

For most of our history this has been on the other side of the world and interest was nil. Now our sons and daughters are stationed there in the confrontation that could cost many lives. When it's all over and the dust has settled, we will get around to asking the question, "Was it worth it?" Let's decide now what our answer will be.



Leake Association holds prayer service for Mid-East

The Leake County Association sponsored a prayer service for the Middle East crisis on Dec. 9, at the Carthage Coliseum, with over 400 people in attendance. Michael Weeks, director of missions, said, "The purpose of the meeting was to have a day of prayer for the military personnel, families, leaders, hostages, and peace."

Chaplain Col. Bill Jones, USAF Retired, spoke of the need for continued prayer for the service men and women. He assured the families that a chaplain would be with military per-

sonnel wherever they are serving.

Others who were involved in the prayer service were Albert Clark, pastor, Thomastown Church; David George, pastor, Lena Church; Jerry Germany, pastor, Pine Grove Church of God; Calvin Gibson, pastor, Hopewell Church; Tony Henry, pastor, Springfield Church; Mark Jones, minister of music at Trinity Church; Keith Mangrum, pastor, Remus Church; Van Moore, pastor, Lena Methodist Church; Eddie Pilgrim, (See PRAYER on page 4)

Islam is American reality, interfaith leader says

By Mark Wingfield

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP) — Islam is an American reality Southern Baptists must prepare to address, an interfaith witness leader said.

Maurice Smith, associate director of interfaith witness with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, spoke about "The Muslim Challenge in America" to state evangelism directors during their annual meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Islam is one of two major religious movements projected by the interfaith witness department to have the greatest impact on America in the 1990s. The other is New Age movements.

Islam is currently the fastest growing religious system in America. Worldwide, one in every seven people is a Muslim.

Smith said America has more Muslims than Episcopalians or Presbyterians. More Muslims live in

America than Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses combined.

"This has particular importance for Southern Baptists because Muslims now live in many of our communities and share their faith with the same people we know."

Smith estimates 4.75 million Muslims live in the United States. However, other estimates range from 3 to 6 million.

He identified five categories of Muslims in America: visitors, immigrants, Americans who have converted to Islam, black Americans and independent or unorthodox Muslims. The largest number of mosques (Muslim places of worship) are located near university campuses, he said.

Islam, which literally translated means "submission," is the religion of people who claim to be totally submitted or dedicated to Allah, the Arabic

term for God. Muslims are followers of Islam.

Islam began in the sixth century in what is now Saudi Arabia with the work of Mohammed, who said God spoke to him through the angel Gabriel and dictated a series of messages which represented the will of God for all people. After Mohammed's death, these messages were collected into the Koran.

Humanly speaking, the chance of Muslims converting to Christianity is small, Smith explained, primarily due to their intense commitment to their faith.

Muslims can be converted to Christianity, Smith said, but presenting the Christian message effectively to Muslims will require patience and sensitivity.

"The things Baptists do best are least effective in witnessing to

Muslims," he warned. "I believe in what we're doing, but I'm convinced people in other religious groups aren't hearing us. They're talking on AM and we're talking on FM."

"Baptist staples such as preaching, singing, meeting, and eating don't attract Muslims," Smith said.

"Muslims resent Christian preaching and often dislike Christian missionaries," he said, noting that Muslims have no professional missionaries because every member is expected to be a missionary.

Further, Muslims often are confused and offended by Christian worship styles, he explained. "They view our demeanor as irreverent and worldly and don't understand our mixing of the sexes in classes and in worship."

Baptists attempting to introduce Muslims into Christian worship would do well to begin with some basic in-

formation, he suggested. The culture shock will be less if Baptists take Muslim friends to the church facility when no one is there and explain what things are and how worship takes place.

"We need to recover a sense that we are witnesses by virtue of our transformed nature," Smith said. "We should not witness because we fear if we don't God is going to back us into a corner and make us wish we had."

A witness springing from an overflowing love of God will be better received by Muslims than a confrontational approach, he said.

"Muslims are taught they have to share their faith because of their obedience to Allah. They are really off balance when they meet someone who witnesses out of the joy of knowing Jesus."

Wingfield writes for HMB.

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Graham returns to Nashville from Kuwait

NASHVILLE (BP) — "You really get to practice what you preach," Maurice Graham says about his four-and-a-half month confinement in the American Embassy in Kuwait.

The Shelbyville, Tenn., native, who was released along with 150 other Americans Dec. 9, added, "You learn to pray for your enemies."

His escape came just weeks before all supplies would be depleted by the hostages at the embassy, said Graham, a Southern Baptist worker in Kuwait.

Graham commented on his stay in Kuwait during an interview with the Baptist and Reflector, the newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the morning after his arrival in Nashville.

He and his wife, Laurie, and two sons, Peter and Aaron, were part of a small band of refugees who went to the embassy just after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait Aug. 2. Their home and church building had been broken into and the hourly danger of being taken prisoner led them to make the move for diplomatic shelter. "We had

no choice," he said.

Laurie Graham and the sons joined other Americans and Westerners who were released in September. They have been staying in a home provided by Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville.

The situation was uncertain, shaky, at first, Graham said. "We were relatively safe inside the embassy compound, while all around us was devastation and destruction."

In their haste to evacuate the country, many people left everything they owned; and others went into hiding for fear of being captured by Iraqis. "Houses were ransacked, the church building was sacked, plumbing and pipes were ripped out and stolen — along with furniture, clothing, everything," he said.

Graham reported he heard the kind of gunfire that indicated executions were taking place. Munitions were pointed toward the compound and mustard gas containers were placed near it.

He saw troops searching homes again and again to determine who had

left — and who remained.

"If you were a resister to the invasion, or if you were caught helping to feed or hide people, you could have been shot," Graham said.

The paradox to Graham was that he had worshipped with Iraqis in the National Evangelical Church, where he was associate pastor.

"They're human beings who are also caught in a situation in which they don't have a lot of control and, from my point of view, which they don't really understand."

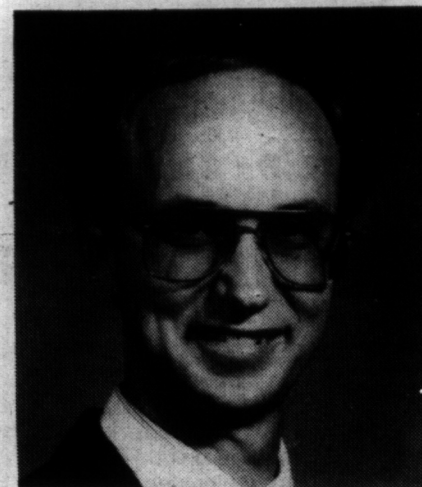
What's important "is not how much

tuna I ate," continued Graham, referring to the tuna and rice which were the main ingredients of their diet. Accounts of people's needs and the healing work of The National Evangelical Church are the important things, he noted.

He proudly reported the church, which drew worshippers from 28 ethnic groups, was continuing its ministry despite extensive problems.

Members care for 43 severely handicapped children at a local hospital and pay the salaries of 19 people who

(See **GRAHAM** on page 4)



Maurice Graham

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 20, 1990

Published Since 1877



Mississippi had the most youths participating in state youth Bible drills for 1990. The state also was recognized for having the largest number of children involved in church, associational and state Bible drills for 1990 with 1,666. (Photo by Jim Veneman)

State receives discipleship honors

NASHVILLE — The Mississippi Baptist Convention received two awards for discipleship training during December planning meetings at the Baptist Sunday School Board. Roy Edgemon, (second from left) is director of the board's Discipleship Training Department. Receiving the awards are, from left, Norman Rogers, consultant; David Morrow, preschool/children's consultant; Robin Nichols, consultant; and Mose Dangerfield, director. Mississippi was recognized for having the greatest percentage of Discipleship Training members ordering Discipleship Training periodicals at 49.1 percent.

Home Board trustees hear report from Saudi Arabia

ATLANTA (BP) — More than 120 Southern Baptist chaplains are ministering to American military personnel in Saudi Arabia, trustees of the Home Mission Board were told.

Lew Burnett, HMB director of military chaplaincy, reported on the ministry of chaplains assigned to Operation Desert Shield during the trustees' December executive committee meeting.

Some chaplains are conducting up to five Bible studies a day and leading multiple worship services on Sunday, Burnett said. One chaplain reported holding baptismal services in the Persian Gulf.

Troops have been overwhelmed with Bibles, as individuals and organizations have sent Scriptures to the desert. Burnett said the Home Mission Board also has sent Bibles with troops, but the need now is for Bible study materials.

Mailing restrictions on religious literature have been lifted. Burnett said, "At the present time, anyone can

send any religious materials to any military personnel they desire in Saudi Arabia."

Trustees were asked to refer people to the HMB chaplaincy office for suggestions on how to be a part of the Persian Gulf ministry.

Trustees also heard that year-to-date Annie Armstrong Easter Offering receipts are 8.1 percent more than 1989 receipts. The total of \$35.4 million is less than the \$41 million goal set by Woman's Missionary Union, but more than the \$32.85 million the HMB budgeted to receive from the annual offering.

In other business, trustees voted to include in the total missionary count Mission Service Corps volunteers who serve at least two years. Currently 1,301 people serve as Mission Service Corps volunteers.

The committee elected four people to the Atlanta staff and approved appointment of 19 missions personnel. New staff members include:

— Ronald John Owens, associate director of prayer and spiritual awakening. Owens, a native of Canada, and his wife, Pat, have served in full-time music evangelism since 1964.

— Michael David Riggins, associate director of Mission Service Corps. A native of Albuquerque, N.M., he moves to the position from San Jose, Calif., where he was area Baptist Student Union director for Santa Clara Valley Baptist Association.

— Devane T. Simms Jr., associate director of the short-term volunteer department. Simms has a been a home missionary since 1984, working with students in Akron, Ohio. He is a native of Ruston, La.

— Henry E. Smart, associate director of field servicing in new church extension. The Texas native and former pastor moves from Phoenix where he worked as a church starter strategist for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

Churches can help East Europe survive harsh winter

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist churches can help Romanians, Bulgarians, and Soviets survive the harsh conditions expected this winter.

Many people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are facing not only a cold winter but economic chaos and hunger as their nations struggle to adjust to profound social change.

For several months, Western European Baptists have been sending food and basic medicine packages to Romania and Bulgaria. Each parcel contains items such as margarine, oil, flour, rice, cheese, powdered milk, coffee, soap, washing powder, aspirin, soups, sausages, and canned meats.

In a carefully coordinated operation, the packages of essentials have been mailed directly from Baptist churches in Western Europe to churches in the East. "If guidelines are

followed, the governments will not require senders or recipients to pay expensive customs charges on aid packages," said Karl-Heinz Walter, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

The response of European Baptists has been so great that better and cheaper arrangements now have been made to ship the parcels. They now will be trucked into Romania and Bulgaria, with some packages being shipped on to the Baltic republics and other parts of the Soviet Union.

Southern Baptists and others in North America who have requested opportunities to help also can participate, but not by sending parcels.

Baptist World Aid and the Foreign Mission Board have made joint arrangements for supporting the aid effort by opening a special fund.

Contributions received will be for-

warded immediately to the European Baptist Federation in Hamburg, Germany, and used to pay for food packages.

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, the relief division of the Baptist World Alliance, estimated each package will cost \$25 to put together and ship. "If the same package was shipped from the United States it would cost nearly \$50 to air-mail and \$25 to send by surface mail, and then it would not arrive until winter had ended," said Montacute. "This system will feed more people."

Funds for the project sent to the Foreign Mission Board should be marked "Manna — Food Parcels for Eastern Europe." Funds sent to Baptist World Aid should be designated "Baptist Response-Europe."

"The beauty of this plan is that it allows Southern Baptist churches of

any size or even individual families to help," said Keith Parker, FMB area director for Europe. "Winter is going to be awful in these countries. Indications are that many people will face hunger and that shortages in medicines will cause untold suffering to families. Already many items are

being rationed. Here's a chance for us to make a difference."

Churches are being asked not to send large loads of food and clothing because of problems with both storing and distributing bulky shipments. The small packages shipped by Euro-

(See **E. EUROPE** on page 4)

November gifts ahead of '89

November gifts from Mississippi churches through their Cooperative Program totaled \$1,639,294, according to an announcement by Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

This brings the 1990 total income from participating churches to \$18,680,009, which is \$1,205,671 more than that received in the first 11 months of 1989, or a 6.9 percent

increase.

The total given thus far is also \$730,640 more than the budget calls for in 11 months. Giving in December would only have to be \$901,121 in order for Mississippi Baptists to meet budget goals for the year.

The 1990 budget is \$19,581,130. Giving in 1990 has averaged \$1.7 million per month.

Keys to church growth cited at first annual HMB conference

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP) — Vision, pastoral leadership, Sunday School, evangelism, and ministry were repeatedly touted as keys to church growth during the first national church growth conference sponsored by the Home Mission Board.

The conference was held at First Southern Baptist Church in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Speakers ranged from denominational leaders to mission pastors. They represented suburban churches, inner city churches, black churches, ethnic churches, and small-town churches.

In the closing session, HMB President Larry Lewis urged participants to remember the basic principles they had heard and adapt them to their unique situations.

"If you tried to implement every idea you've heard here, you would likely perform such an operation that the patient would never recover," he said.

"Don't just do what comes down the pike from Atlanta or Nashville," Lewis urged. "Every church field is different. Every pastor needs his own vision."

The idea of vision was central to every testimony given.

"It's one thing to be a man of God, but it's another thing to have the plan of God," said Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church in Woodstock, Ga.

Pastoral leadership was another recurring theme of the conference.

"If we're going to reach this country for Christ, pastors have got to turn around," Darrell Robinson, HMB evangelism vice president, said. "Pastors are the key. The speed of the leader is the speed of the team."

Keith Wiginton, pastor, First Church, Altus, Okla., described a power struggle that inevitably develops between a new pastor and a congregation. "The pastor should be

the leader," he explained.

"But he's a dumbbo if he doesn't realize he needs those deacons, he needs those other people."

The place to make the best use of those church leaders is Sunday School, speakers agreed.

Sunday School remains a staple of growing Baptist churches, said Bernie Spooner, director of the Sunday School division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Pastors should use their best workers as Sunday School teachers, making that the front line of ministry, he explained. "The strongest among us need to be challenged and convicted that Sunday School is where they should be doing their work."

Ultimately, Sunday School should be used as an evangelistic tool, he said.

Speakers called for a holistic approach to evangelism as an ongoing mindset rather than an occasional strategy.

"If you think evangelism is to do two crusades a year, you're not doing evangelism," said Jorge Navarro, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Nacimiento in Wilmington, Calif.

"The proper attitude produces the proper atmosphere for church growth," Wiginton added. "In most of our churches we've got an attitude problem which produces an atmosphere problem. We get what we expect."

"The average Baptist church has limited its field because it wants to be a comfortable social club," Wiginton said. "It wants to reach out to the whites, the rich. But there are only so many of those people in any community."

"Are we reaching out to the downtrodden, to the helpless?" Lewis asked. "Growing churches have a compassion and concern for the people around them."

Newton Carey Jr., pastor of Truevine Church in Oakland, Calif., told how his church had grown by extending its ministry into a nearby housing project.

"We have found a way to put shoes on the gospel," Carey said, "when the church starts meeting people's needs and sharing the gospel."

Speakers also talked about the need for celebration in worship.

"The reason our convention has lost so many people to the charismatics is not because of theology, but because of deadness," Hunt declared.

"We have no sad music at our church," Carey added. "I tell the guy who plays the organ to play it like it's alive."

Wiginton said celebration includes "heart" music. The music minister's job is to touch people's hearts through music, not to elevate the music appreciation level of the congregation, he said.

Speakers also frequently referred to the urgent need for prayer.

"One of the marks of a growing church is an intentional, extraordinary emphasis on prayer," said HMB extension vice president Charles Chaney. "These churches believe growth is a divine process."

This kind of prayer emphasis will lead a church to desire growth, Chaney said.

"When we start talking about growth, in many churches there is a fear, a reluctance that God doesn't want the church to grow, that churches should be small."

"We should not be surprised when the church grows; we should be surprised when the church does not grow," Chaney said.

But Wiginton warned pastors not to look for short cuts to growth.

"The way to grow a church is work, work, work. And most pastors aren't willing to do that."

counsel in person and by telephone, to lead prayer and worship services, to be a Christian friend.

Graham is enthusiastic about the spiritual development he viewed among the group. Some had never read the Bible before, he explained. He has been asked by the United States State Department to continue a counseling service to hostages and families.

When he left five diplomats remained at the embassy, said Graham. The others left with Graham, all taken to the Kuwait airport by cars, some of which were furnished by church members.

"Iraqi Air took us to Frankfurt. It was snowing, so there was a delay there, but finally a TWA airliner brought us home. I called Laurie in Frankfurt. When we got to the United States, I was determined to make it home on Laurie's birthday — and I did." That was Monday, Dec. 10.

Graham said he would be "grossly disappointed" if Americans stopped praying because he and other Americans have returned unharmed. He asked for prayer for the National Evangelical Church, the other Christians in Kuwait, including a Catholic bishop who worked for Graham's release, and for the people involved in the crisis.

"I have no doubt at all that God called me to Kuwait and I would return if things settled down enough to allow it," said Graham.

And Maurice Graham was there to

Hepzibah honors six Guard members



Hepzibah Church, Silver Creek (Lawrence) held a commissioning service Nov. 25 to honor its National Guard members facing a call-up in December. Mrs. Neoto Hedgepeth sang "Love in Any Language." The pastor, Jimmy T. Smith Jr., brought a message on "The Peace of God." The church presented New Testaments to the six men and offered a prayer to God for guidance and protection for them and their families. Supper was served in the church afterward. Left to right are the Guard members (National Guard in Monticello): Bud Russell, Tommy Smith, Phillip Langston, Kenneth Smith, John Branton, and Shannon King.

Chapman releases open letter

NASHVILLE (BP) — In an "Open Letter to Southern Baptists" released Dec. 12, SBC President Morris Chapman solicited recommendations for the SBC committee appointments from "any person within our Southern Baptist family."

Chapman focused attention on people to serve as members of the 1991 Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee, Credentials Committee and Tellers Committee, all of which are appointed by the president.

In the open letter Chapman said, "I hope to appoint persons whose spirit reflects a deep love for and a fresh walk with our dear Lord Jesus Christ."

"People serving on these committees should have a genuine burden for lost souls."

Chapman reiterated three other personal qualifications which he frequently has identified. The person appointed must:

1. Be a cooperating Southern Baptist;
2. Have a commitment to

perpetuating an allegiance to God's perfect word through the institutional life of Southern Baptists; and

3. Be in agreement with the Peace Committee's statement on Scripture.

"While I will stay within these cooperative and theological guidelines in my appointments, I will, as I have pledged, reach beyond perceived political parameters," Chapman said.

Procedurally, Chapman asked that all recommendations be submitted on a form that may be obtained by writing Mrs. Martha Gaddis, The Executive Committee, 901 Commerce Street, Nashville, TN 37203. Only recommendations submitted on approved forms and containing all of the requested information will be considered. All recommendation forms must be postmarked by Feb. 22, 1991.

PRAYER

From page 3

pastor, Pearl Hill Church; Jim Riley, pastor, First Assembly of God Church; Bobby Roberson, pastor, Pleasant Grove Congregational Methodist Church; Tommy Robinson, pastor, Bethlehem M.B. Church; and Harold Wright, Leake County Baptist Brotherhood director.

A "Wall Of Hope" was displayed with the names of many of the military personnel from Leake County. Several names were added to the wall at the conclusion of the prayer service. THE WALL OF HOPE — BECAUSE WE CARE is currently displayed in the entrance to Wal-Mart in Carthage. If a name of someone does not appear on the wall, a person may contact the Leake County Baptist Association (267-4342) to ask that the name be added.

E. EUROPE

From page 3

pean Baptists will be distributed to the most needy through networks established by local churches in Romania and Bulgaria.

"We already have heard reports that the packages are getting through," Parker said. "It is essential that the packages be sent through this system, though, since we've heard of others winding up for sale on the black market."

Both Parker and Montacute serve with Walter on Baptist Response-Europe, a committee established last January to coordinate response to the changing situation in Eastern Europe.

"So much has already been done," said Montacute. "Churches and individuals have already been so generous. But more is needed."

GRAHAM

From page 3

work there.

Church members have fed countless numbers of people in Kuwait, and they have done it sacrificially. Half of the church income is spent for food for the hungry.

Even though confined to the embassy, Graham continued his work with the church. The telephone became his link with members. He recorded sermons by phone. He also encouraged members to accept leadership positions. Pastor Jerry Zandstra of the Reformed Church of America is on furlough, explained Graham.

His telephone ministry also reached others. One of the first phone calls Graham made after arriving in Nashville was to report on a relationship he formed by telephone. Graham learned about a young Kuwaiti man who was visiting family in Kuwait from his home in Louisiana and was trapped during the takeover.

Church members have risked their lives to take food to them, reported Graham. Because of the witness to him, the young man became a Christian during the past few months. Graham contacted the wife, who is also a Christian, to report on him. Calls to an American

the soldiers with only a dog as comfort were especially meaningful to Graham.

The fact that telephone communication was even available is just one example of God's provision for the group staying in the embassy, explained Graham. "God handpicked the people to make it possible for all of us to survive," Graham said was the remark of United States Ambassador W. Nathaniel "Nat" Howell, concerning the group. After women and children left in September, the group included eight diplomats and 16 refugees.

Early on in the invasion, Iraqis had cut off the electricity, cut the phone lines, shut off access to water.

Besides rigging the phones to make contact with the outside world possible, the group included someone who could repair a generator; someone who cooked delicious desserts from the few provisions available besides tuna and rice. Someone else was able to plant and grow vegetables; and someone dug a well so water was available for washing and bathing — without depleting the clean water supply.

The Iraqis must have been amazed, Graham said, that the compound swimming pool remained full — despite the fact the group was using it for cooking, etc., after boiling. "But there was an old, hidden water line that was not discovered."

And Maurice Graham was there to



Gooch

Mississippi College will host the 1990 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference at the A. E. Wood Coliseum, Dec. 27-28. Over 2,500 are expected to attend.

The program for the conference, which will carry the theme, "Delight Thyself Also in the Lord," will feature Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, a speaker for the opening session Thursday afternoon.

Principal speaker for the remainder of the conference will be Jerry Pipes of Lewisville, Texas.

Other personalities featured will be musicians Chris and Diane Machen of Dallas, Texas, gospel comedy team Phil and Russ of Arlington, Texas, and Lisa Leavell and Sheldon Gooch, both of Jackson.

Conference sessions will begin at 2 p.m. on the 27th, and conclude at 3:30 p.m. on the 28th.

To pre-register, contact the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 968-3800, in Jackson. Registration fee is \$3 per person, whether in advance or at the door.

FMB trustees meet, pray for Persian Gulf

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees prayed at their December meeting for ways to influence the crisis in the Persian Gulf, noted an upsurge in missionary appointments, and approved a proposal to study the location and facilities of the Foreign Mission Board.

The trustees, meeting Dec. 10-12, referred the study proposal to their administrative committee for future deliberation. The action followed an earlier motion by trustee Ron Wilson of California to consider criteria for moving the board. That motion was tabled at the October meeting after speculation arose that it was motivated by the Southern Baptist Convention controversy.

Trustees, who prayed in thanksgiving for the pre-Christmas release of hostages from Iraq and Kuwait, also noted that another prayer had been answered for Southern Baptist hostage Maurice Graham. He had prayed he would be released from the besieged U.S. Embassy in Kuwait in time to help promote Southern Baptists' Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

Prayer also centered on the Persian Gulf crisis in general and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in particular. Concern for the gulf situation took an unusual twist when trustee Horace Hamm of North Carolina asked trustees to pray that one of their number could go to Iraq to tell Saddam about "the message of redemption and hope in Jesus Christ."

Hamm singled out a trustee he said he thought of when he was on his knees in prayer. The trustee, who will pray for an opportunity to go to Iraq, has spiritual commitment and the status to attract attention there, Hamm said.

Trustees also appointed 35 new missionaries and reappointed eight former missionaries at the December meeting to bring the 1990 total to 414 — the highest number since 1985's record 429. The total, a 25 percent jump over 1989, includes 236 new career and associate missionaries and 178 International Service Corps workers who serve two years or more.

The board counted 3,846 missionaries assigned to 121 countries as of mid-December, with the addition of the 43 appointments and reappointments to the mission force, the additions of Denmark and Czechoslovakia to the country count and the deletion of Western Samoa.

The FMB location study proposal,

which would lead to establishing criteria for a possible relocation of the board, was tabled in October at Wilson's request after speculation arose about its motivation.

Wilson, denying the motion had any connection to the SBC controversy, said that it was intended to get the board to develop criteria to determine merits of a move either in or out of Virginia. Major corporations do the same thing, he said, to evaluate best use of resources.

Speculation centered on belief that Wilson's motion was meant to apply political pressure on Virginia's state Baptist body, which was scheduled to meet the following month to consider alternative funding for cooperative Southern Baptist causes in reaction to the SBC controversy.

Some trustees commented that such a funding action by Virginia Baptists, later approved at their annual meeting in November, should cause the Foreign Mission Board to consider reviewing its location.

However, trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Kentucky said in an interview during the December meeting that the board "has too much at stake to allow politics or emotion to prevail" in any such deliberations.

Parks said the location question has been reviewed seriously with stewardship and efficiency in mind ever since the board moved to its 3806 Monument Ave. location in Richmond in 1959. The board has been in Richmond for its entire 145-year history.

Parks said several such evaluations, the latest in 1989, came as the board made decisions to add facilities and purchase additional property. Each time, he said, studies have revealed that the space for growth was adequate and that a move would not be worth the cost.

About a year ago an analysis by one trustee, who reviewed a Harvard University study on moving major corporations, said the study estimated such moves could cost anywhere from \$33 million to \$150 million.

"We have adequate space, we are concerned about stewardship, and we have a strong commitment to try to increase the percentage of total budget sent overseas," Parks said. "Last year, we sent 89 percent overseas. While I'm always willing to study the situation as times change, I would not want to be part of anything so expensive it would reduce what we send our missionaries."

On the question of speculation about a possible move, Hancock said the

discussion has resulted in "emotional reactions on both extremes from some trustees and some Virginia Baptists.... We've got to get in the middle and be objective. Individual trustees do not speak for the entire board," he said.

"The primary thing here is not to consider moving this agency out of Virginia," Hancock told trustees. "The primary thing is to determine how we can utilize and be good stewards of what we have" wherever the board is.

He said he hoped Southern Baptists "will have enough confidence in staff and trustees not to think we're going

... pray that one... could go to Iraq to tell Saddam about "the message of redemption and hope in Jesus Christ."

to do something premature or of a reactionary nature. Our concern is for the long-range program of missions, and I trust there's nobody here (at the trustee meeting) who... thinks we would do something without a proper evaluation" of the board's total ministry.

In another action related to Virginia Baptists, trustees voted to consider a bylaw change at their next meeting. The change would eliminate, by attrition, the 12 local Virginia trustees elected to the board above the three

Virginia Baptists elected on a population representation basis.

Boards and agencies across the SBC adopted the practice of extra local trustees in earlier years when they held fewer meetings, transportation was time-consuming, quorums hard to achieve, and trustees needed to be available to conduct business between sessions.

The trustee action followed a request by the SBC Executive Committee that SBC entities study the concept of local representatives for a possible amendment to their charters.

The Executive Committee request came after a referral of a motion at the 1989 annual SBC meeting, made by Foreign Mission Board trustee Gary Smith of Oklahoma, that the Executive Committee study the local trustee question.

Like the vote on the proposal to consider the board's location, the action on local trustees raised speculation that it was aimed at Virginia Baptists.

"It's nothing against Virginia Baptists," Smith said. "They serve the board well. I had no object of malice. I just wanted to balance the board. I felt it was something of the past that needed to be examined."

Trustees also received copies of a statement of beliefs drafted by European Baptists in response to recommendations Foreign Mission Board trustees tied to their May 1989 transfer of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, to European Baptists.

Steve Hardy of North Carolina, who

chairs the Europe, Middle East and North Africa committee, said the committee will develop a report during the next four months on European Baptists' response to trustees recommendations.

One of the 10 recommendations suggested "a written statement of European Baptist principles common to all European Baptists" to define the seminary's biblical commitment and "to which seminary teachers would subscribe."

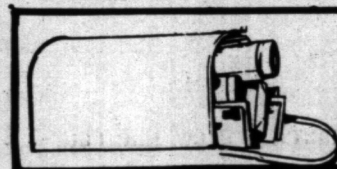
Seminary trustees drafted such a statement. It has been approved by the executive committee of the European Baptist Federation and will receive final consideration when the federation's council meets next September.

The statement contains sections on God's sovereignty, the Scriptures, the nature of salvation, the church and the Christian hope.

During the meeting, trustees stood to applaud Davis and Mary Saunders for a 39-year career in missions. Saunders, vice president for Africa, retires Dec. 31.

O'Brien writes for FMB.

Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the things you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly. — Henry David Thoreau



Letters to the editor

"Enough is enough"

Editor:

I would like to give my hearty agreement to your editorial of Dec. 6, 1990. In it you gave a plea for someone to say, "enough is enough." Well, I for one think "enough is enough," and let's "call a halt to tearing the castle down."

However, if this is going to take place, it seems to me that discipline is going to have to be exercised by our leaders and by our editors. Nothing fuels the fires of controversy like the written word, nothing! This is a proven fact in the history of every war or revolution that has ever taken place. Therefore, my plea is for restraint in reporting! Not every gripe or complaint by either side is newsworthy unless the intent is to continue to stir the embers of controversy.

For instance, I personally don't consider an "Alternative Baptist Publisher Established," newsworthy. My former professors at New Orleans Seminary have had their own alternative publisher for years! Sadly, "The Baptist Record," was used, in this case, by some in our convention who want to air their poisonous complaints and continue to stir the fires of controversy.

I, for one, say, "Enough is enough!" Let's no longer allow our wonderful Baptist state paper to be used as a purveyor of poison, but instead, use it as a proclaimer of the good news as it should be. A fire left unstirred soon goes out; and while we may never all agree, maybe we can at least love one another. Our Mississippi Baptist Convention was a great start. Let's follow their lead.

Greg Johnston, pastor
Fair River Church,
Brookhaven

BP not intended to be official news agency

Editor:

A letter to the editor in a previous issue took exception to news that did not come from Baptist Press. The letter described Baptist Press as being the "official news agency of the convention." Indeed, it may be the official news agency at this point; but, if it is, that is reason enough for not relying on it.

Baptist Press was never intended to be an official news agency. It was begun in 1946 at the insistence of the Baptist state paper editors. It was first located at the Sunday School Board but was later moved to the Executive Committee so that all Baptists could help fund it through the Cooperative Program and, thus, protect it from being an official voice of anyone. It was never intended to be a public relations operation of the Executive Committee. On July 17, the Executive Committee took it over and, I suppose, that now it has become "official."

At this point Baptist Press is simply the dispensing agency of whatever news it receives from whatever source. That points up the desperate need for Associated Baptist Press in order to have a balanced and free-flowing news operation for all Southern Baptists.

Associated Baptist Press is intended simply to be a free and unfettered news source, not beholden to any group or person. This is baptistic and certainly not to be feared.

Don McGregor
Brandon

Claim the promises

Editor:

God tells us that all the promises found in the holy Bible are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. If we don't start claiming and using them now where will we be (II Cor. 1:20)?

There won't be any enemies in heaven for God to prepare us a table before (Psalm 23:5).

We won't have need of healing because no one will be sick. There won't be any death, or fear, or loss of courage (Psalm 103:3b, Rev. 21:4).

We won't have the need of becoming prosperous because the streets will be paved with gold; the gates will be pearls (III John 1:2, Rev. 21:21).

God won't have to be our protector, or fortress, or stronghold because there will be no enemies for him to protect us from (Nahum 1:7, Psalm 18:2, Rev. 21:8).

So, if we don't begin to claim and use all of his promises while we are on this earth when will they be used?

Surely, God didn't give them in vain (Isa. 55:11)?

Linda S. Leach
Greenville

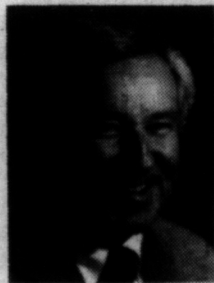
Calvary will host senior, single adult workshop

A workshop for leaders of both senior adults and single adults will meet at Calvary Church, Jackson, on Jan. 26.

Horace Kerr, contract consultant for the Discipleship Training Department in family ministry, will lead sessions related to the text of the new "Senior Adult Leader's Notebook," compiled by W.L. Howse III.

Topics of the sessions include starting a senior adult ministry, enriching one through activities, enlarging a ministry, and use of resources.

The Single Adult workshop will be led by J. Clark Hensley, recently retired contract consultant for the Discipleship Training Department's family ministry. Hensley will help leaders learn to develop or expand this ministry in their churches.



Kerr



Hensley

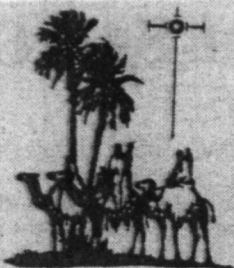
A conference fee of \$6 per person should accompany requests for reservations. Requests should be mailed no later than Jan. 21. Write Senior and Single Adult Leadership Workshop, Discipleship Training Department, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, phone 968-3800.

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Visitors to the King

By Ron Kirkland

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:1-2).

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Luke 2:15).



Kirkland

Matthew's Gospel and Luke's Gospel tell the Christmas story. I have always been fascinated by the unique contributions of the two presentations, and I am thankful that God inspired and preserved both accounts. Without Matthew, we would not know about the Magi; and without Luke we would not know about the shepherds. Luke, the traditional author of the Gospel of Luke, is perhaps the only gentile (non-Jewish) biblical writer; but he tells us of the Jewish shepherds gathering at the birthplace of Jesus and going out and making the event known to their brothers.

Matthew, on the other hand, is written from a strong Jewish perspective; but from Matthew we learn of the coming of gentiles from the East. The gentile writer tells about the Jewish shepherds, and the Jewish writer tells us of foreign Magi who worshiped the king of the Jews. Whatever else we learn from the story, it is clear that Jews and gentiles are welcome to worship Jesus.

The contrast between the two sets of visitors does not end at nationality, or religious background. The Magi were men of wealth as is indicated by their valuable gifts. They were men of secular and religious authority who probably had obtained their wisdom with age.

The shepherds, on the other hand, were persons who had an honorable life, but shepherds we know in other biblical accounts were young people. Wealthy people had servants, sons, or daughters (Rachel) who tended the sheep so the shepherds were probably not wealthy and were considered unlearned and ignorant.

In the providence of God in the fullness of time, Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem. God could have arranged for the birth of the Messiah to have occurred anywhere in Israel, but he chose a stable in Bethlehem. The shepherds may not have been welcome in Herod's palace as the Magi were, but a stable has total public access. The Bible makes it clear that all are welcome to come and worship this king. Rich and poor, young and old, men and women, Jew and gentile, wise and unlearned, city cultured and "agricultured" have a place of welcome worship before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. YOU ARE WELCOME THERE! Have a joyous Christmas!

Kirkland is pastor, First Church, Amory.

Former Russian soldier will go home as seminary teacher

By Art Toalston

PINEVILLE, La. — After nearly half a century away, a Russian soldier who became a Christian in a refugee camp in Germany and a religion professor in Louisiana, plans to share his faith in his Russian homeland.

Nikolai Alexandrenko is to arrive in Moscow in mid-January to teach Old and New Testament courses at a seminary being opened by Baptists in the Soviet Union.

Alexandrenko, 68, who grew up in the Russian city of Bryansk, was professor of religion and classical languages at Louisiana College in Pineville from 1959 until his retirement in 1989. He will teach at the new seminary for six months and may opt to extend his work there. His wife, Mae, plans to remain in Louisiana during his initial months in Moscow.

Alexandrenko's first awareness of the gospel came in a refugee camp in Germany after World War II.

A lieutenant and a seasoned paratrooper in the Soviet army, he was shot in the chest, left leg and arm and taken prisoner by German troops in 1943. He received no medical care in prison camp but managed to recover.

When the war ended, Alexandrenko chose to remain in Germany. He knew Soviet leader Joseph Stalin branded soldiers who had surrendered as traitors and was sentencing them to hard labor for up to 25 years.

In November 1949, Alexandrenko was huddling in military barracks that had been converted into a refugee camp. He tried to build a fire in a wood stove for some warmth. The stove was clogged with paper, so he began pulling out the debris. He noticed two small leaflets in Russian and then read his first New Testament passages.

Revelation 3:20 was printed on one leaflet: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him . . ." Matthew 11:28 was on the other:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"There I offered my first prayer, saying, 'God, if thou really art, give me light and lift me out of this condition,'" Alexandrenko recounted. "When I stood up . . . I felt that I was a new man."

Alexandrenko hungered to find a Bible and learn more about God. As a youth he had been a communist organizer and militant atheist who once participated in the torching of an abandoned Russian Orthodox church. As a boy he had witnessed several community burnings of Bibles and other religious literature. "I hardly had ever heard the name of Jesus Christ," he said.

A week after reading the two pamphlets, Alexandrenko encountered a former fellow prisoner of war who had become a Baptist. He visited the Baptist mission in Munich and "for the first time I really heard who Jesus was and what he did for me on Calvary's cross."

He received a Bible and began studying it. In a month he made a public profession of faith in Christ. He also sensed a call to missions — hoping someday perhaps to return to his native Russia — and began preaching in camps for Russian, Ukrainian and Polish refugees in West Germany. A year later he was sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance as a ministerial student in the United States.

Foreign Mission Board age limits during the 1950s and '60s prevented him from being appointed as a missionary, so Alexandrenko focused on his teaching at Louisiana College as a way of exhorting young people to venture out to the world's mission fields.

Last summer he heard Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks at the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans tell of dramatic new opportunities for witness in Eastern Europe.

Alexandrenko said he felt like Isaiah may have felt when God asked, "Whom shall I send?"

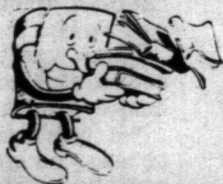
Like the Old Testament prophet, he replied, "Here am I, send me." His assignment to the Soviet Union was arranged through the Foreign Mission Board's International Service Corps for volunteers working abroad for four months or more.

Last September Alexandrenko was able to begin corresponding with a brother and sister in Russia for the first time in some 60 years. He learned that his seven other siblings had died, including three brothers during World War II. He also learned that his mother's burial plot in Bryansk had been bulldozed years ago as the provincial capital city expanded.

"I was excited and surprised that my sister was still alive," he recently told the Louisiana Baptist Message. "In Russia, living is hard. My brother wrote that I probably did not remember him, since I saw him last when he was 4 years old . . . But I remember."

And this former communist youth organizer can't wait to tell his family about Jesus.

Toalston writes for FMB.



Book reviews

HOPE FOR THE SEPARATED by Gary D. Chapman (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982, paper, 114 pages.)

Gary Chapman, a Baptist pastor and counselor, has written *Toward a Growing Marriage* (Moody, 1979), but he is aware that many marriages are wounded rather than growing. For these, he has written *Hope For the Separated*.

Chapman speaks directly to the separated with sensitivity, gently prodding the reader to face reality and take action. He begins with the assumption that husband and wife are separated, and he walks them through the steps of reconciliation. The book assumes that only the reader seeks reconciliation, but that later both partners might seek it.

Assuming that there is always hope, Chapman gives positive direction for constructive action. He lists three reasons for wounded marriages: lack of an intimate relationship with God, lack of an intimate relationship with your mate, or lack of an intimate understanding and acceptance of yourself. Then he carefully discusses how to heal all three areas of hurt and failure.

Practical advice is given on dating while separated (don't do it), long distance love, handling loneliness and

bitterness, and what to do if your spouse returns. Readers may be surprised that Chapman advises separated couples who seek reconciliation to see a counselor for several sessions before moving back together, or the old pressures on the marriage will be too great.

This book is for people who wish to heal a marriage, not for those who want a divorce. Chapman consistently asks probing questions to get the reader to stay open to the possibility of reconciliation. However, if your spouse insists on divorce, Chapman says that divorce laws are so liberal that it will only result in greater legal fees to contest the divorce. He stresses the need of the children for love and security. While he deals with the issue of remarriage only briefly, he points out that the divorce rate of second marriages is higher than that of first marriages; perhaps because it takes about two years to recover from the trauma of divorce, and many remarry too soon (p. 105).

Hope for the Separated is a book designed for action. Each chapter concludes with a checklist of things to do. The appendix gives short descriptions of books and tapes for the separated, married, and divorced. There are 24 blank pages in the back for notes.

If you are separated, please talk to a Christian counselor and read this book before considering divorce. If you are a minister, pick up a copy to give to someone who comes to you for help. — Reviewed by Bob Rogers, pastor, Calvary Church, Gloster.

Larson, Bob; SATANISM: THE SEDUCTION OF AMERICA'S YOUTH; Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The author is the host of "TALK-BACK," a daily radio talk show that addresses contemporary issues.

He begins each chapter with a conversation he had with a teenager or adult who had called in to his radio show. He then uses that conversation as an introduction to the material in that particular chapter. Much of the book contains accounts of phone conversations the author has had that deal with various aspects of satanism.

The most interesting chapter in the book to me was the first. In this chapter, the author discusses the experiences he had while on tour with the rock group, "Slayer."

The book would be enlightening and informative reading for all youth workers and parents of teen-agers. — Reviewed by Greg Potts, pastor, Heuck's Retreat Church, Brookhaven.

Hymns Baptists sing . . .

"It came upon the midnight clear"

By William J. Reynolds

Hymns stressing the social message of Christmas — "peace on earth, good will toward men" — are distinctly American. Carols from England and Europe do not reflect this concern.

Edmund H. Sears, a minister living in Wayland, Mass., wrote this hymn in 1849. The storm clouds of strife were gathering and would erupt a dozen years later and embroil the nation in Civil War.

The first stanza of Sears's hymn speaks of the appearance of the heavenly host and the song they sang. There is no mention of the shepherds who heard the song, as mentioned in Luke 2.

Stanza two suggests that the message of peace comes again and again at Christmastime. Here is the assurance that, though this seems to be a "weary world" with its "sad and lowly plains" and "Babel sounds," yet the angels sing "with peaceful wings unfurled."

Other lines speak plainly of man's inhumanity to his fellowman, and the phrase "two thousand years of wrong" refers to the practice of slavery.

How strange it is that this well-known Christmas carol contains no mention of Christ, the newborn King, or any other elements of the scriptural account of Christ's birth from Matthew and Luke, except the song of the heavenly host, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Reynolds is professor of church music, Southwestern Seminary.

Mississippians make Peru connection

By Vicki Heath
Part 2 of 4

The following article is condensed from journal excerpts written by Vicki Heath of Jackson while on volunteer mission trip to Peru with Ashley McCaleb, Jackson; Bobbie Foster, Prentiss; and Janet Murray, Jackson.

September 19, 1990, Wednesday (written on the bus Thursday)

We were picked up at the hotel by Lynn Davidson and daughter Casia in the Landrover. She took us to the Cristo Viene (Christ Comes) Church, built with Lottie Moon funds and Peruvian church member labor. We were met by Pastor Domingo Juarez.

This was a very desolate, dirty, sandy area, houses built touching each other, of adobe, straw mats, tin, cardboard, etc. The church was good construction, brick, tin roof, some ventilation.

We walked up the street, in ankle deep sand, to the church feeding station. The women of the church cook food bought with SBC World Hunger Funds. To the left of the entryway was a small depressed area with a dirty blanket on the ground and two toys, a ball and block. There were four or five children; this was the nursery.

There was a water spigot and two stoves (bricks with a grate across) fueled by wood. The women were cooking carrots, yucca (the roots, no nutritional value at all, fiber and filler only, looked sort of like a potato) and chicken. All of this was open-air, amid flies and dogs. The pastor's wife went inside and cleaned up the children and we took their pictures.

We then drove across the irrigation canal to another neighborhood, even more desperate, if possible, to the Dios Es Luz (God is Light) Church. It was small-adobe front, dirt floor, no ventilation or lights. Out in back was another feeding station, cooking octopus and potatoes. Flies, dogs, and chickens in abundance.

There are nine feeding stations, feeding 750 people a day. The people come to the church with their own containers and take the food home. We left there and drove to the market.

Along the way, we saw housing areas where the entire house was just woven mats. In this area there is much Pima cotton grown. Pima is grown only in Egypt, Arizona, and Peru. We were able to look inside one of the cotton warehouses. Of course, everything is done by hand.

Peggy honored by her former GAs (Acteens here): The first-ever named BYW group was organized and named the Peggy Wallace group.

We went on to First Baptist Church for our conference. Lynn said she had hoped for 50 but would be satisfied with 30. There were 54 in attendance. I had nine in my conference, which was held on the roof. Louisa, the pastor's wife, translated for me. Again we were overwhelmed by the response and I was unable to hold back the tears as each woman came to me.

One lady in particular came to me and said, in broken English, "You are my favorite missionary. You have a beautiful nose!"

The president of the Peru Baptist Convention, Jose Reateguei, spoke to the "tea party" afterwards.

September 20, Thursday

We left Piura at 6:30 a.m. by bus. Dennis took us to the bus depot. We were warned to watch carefully; this was the most dangerous place we would be. When our bus drove up, Dennis couldn't believe it. It was the nicest bus he'd seen in Peru. He said he definitely wants the WMU praying for him.

We headed south across very arid landscape. Sand dunes at times threatened to take over the highway. The bus was comfortable and we had a good driver. We did not pass a single passenger car, only trucks and busses. Since the Fujishock (300 percent inflation), people cannot afford to drive their cars. We arrived at the depot at Chiclayo and were met by Bob Williford from Lubbock. We went to his home where we met his wife Patty and sons Greg, Clint and David.

We saw the Snoopy School where three grades are taught by Ruth and Warren Harris in a small outside building. The boys presented the puppet play, "Jack and the Beanstalk."

We then went to the Baptist Bookstore, which is operated by Linda and Don Johnson. They live over the bookstore in a very humble apartment, no sink, just a spigot near the floor.

After lunch at the hotel with the Willifords, we went on to the First Baptist Church for our conference. The church was lovely and there were 94 in attendance. I had 17 in my conference. After the "tea party" (where we had been especially warned not to eat the cheese sandwiches) we were presented with gifts of crocheted doilies and embroidered roll covers.

September 21, Friday

We caught the bus again early, again applying makeup in the dark, and again no coffee, food, or elevator. At least this time it was downstairs. This ride was much rougher, the road in much worse condition. The landscape was very, very bleak. Burro and donkey trains were a common sight. Some of the most heart-rending sights were women and children who stood in the heat and dirt, watching for a passing vehicle. When a vehicle approached, they scooped up dirt in some sort of container and darted onto the road to fill the potholes, then called out for money. These people are often struck by vehicles.

We were met at the bus depot in Trujillo by Rodolph Dixon. He took us to see the seminary. Roddy Conerly was speaking at chapel.

We split up and stayed at the homes of different missionaries. Janet and I stayed with Mary Jo French, a psychology professor at the seminary. Oh, joy, electricity and hot water.

Karl picked us up and took us to the church, the largest we were in. It had a balcony and microphone. Seven Indian women who had traveled all night to attend were recognized. Again we were overwhelmed by the turnout, an excess of 200 women.

I started out in a room much too small and had to move outside with 19 in my conference. When I moved outside I was in the area where patients wait to see the doctor at the outpatient clinic, so I picked up a few along the way.

Heath is a member of FBC, Jackson, and is Baptist Women's director, Hinds-Madison area.

(To be continued)



A Peruvian woman at a feeding station in Piura prepares to cook octopus.

ACTS will broadcast SS lesson series

The ACTS Satellite Network, Inc. is providing additional weekly broadcasts of the Sunday School lesson series. "The Bible and Life" uses Life & Work lessons' scripture, provided by Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The additional weekly broadcast for "The Bible and Life" will be Tuesdays, 8:00-8:30 a.m. (CST). It is also broadcast Saturdays at 1:00 and 9:00 p.m. (CST).

"The Good News" is produced by Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and uses Uniform lessons as the basis for the study. The additional "Good News" broadcast will be Wednesdays, 8:00-8:30 a.m. (CST). It is also broadcast Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. (CST) on ACTS.

Both of these series' additional broadcasts went into effect the week of Nov. 18, in response to providing Sunday School teacher helps since BTN was terminated. This will make it possible for churches to record the program in time for the weekly teachers and officers meeting on Wednesday evenings.

The programs may be recorded from the ACTS Satellite Network in the local community, or those churches and associations that have the satellite dishes may tune the dishes to Galaxy III Satellite located at 93.5 (degrees West longitude), Transponder (channel) 7. Of course, the ACTS signal is unscrambled.



Faces and places



by Anne Washburn McWilliams

The true gift

Of all the Christmas gifts you have received, which was your favorite? Some stand out in my memory — a doll that I named Rose Marie; a box of sparklers; a tricycle with a bell on the handlebar; a bag of popcorn balls, tinted pink; my first bicycle; my first housecoat, a pink-flowered one that Mama made for my 10th Christmas; a five-pound box of chocolates a boyfriend sent from Minnesota — quite disappointingly stale; the little gold watch that W.D. gave me the Christmas before we married; the birdhouse Daddy built for me . . .

I remember the gift that I had the most joy in giving. It was Christmastime, 1952, and I a student at Southwestern Seminary. As usual, the seminary had set a high goal for the Lottie Moon Offering; those of us on our hall wanted to do our part in meeting our dorm's goal. One night, our devotional leader set before us a challenge: "Have you ever tried giving all that you had?" I had given an offering, what I thought I could afford.

When I was climbing into the top bunk that night, my roommate said, "I'm going to give all the money I have. Want to join me in some fun?" I thought about that briefly. I had less than \$50.00, and was planning to use that for coffee breaks and lunch the next week, and to buy a few small gifts for my family. But her excitement was contagious.

"Yes, yes I will!" I got out of bed, wrote a check for every last penny I had in the bank; shook out of my purse all the money in it; and emptied my piggy bank of its two silver dollars and \$2 bill. I poured it all into a Lottie Moon envelope. Such happiness filled my heart that even now I can-

not adequately describe it.

The true gift is unselfishly offered to another with love. God showed us the meaning of the true gift when he gave us the Gift of his Son. One writer, Thea B. Van Halsema, said, "There must be a better way to celebrate God's Gift than rushing about frantically to overspend on gifts that do not last. There must be better ways to reflect God's Gift in our small gifts of love to others."

In the weekly bulletin of Dawson Memorial Church, Birmingham, Ala., I read a Christmas list credited to Bo Baker of Texas, and I said to myself, "Here is the kind of gift that reflects God's Gift":

"Give a gift to Christ (as in our Lottie Moon envelope); to the loneliest soul you know; to one experiencing a very recent sorrow; to one who would never expect it; to one who has brought you great encouragement this year; to one from away back who greatly influenced and impacted your life; to one most likely to be overlooked — even at this special season; to one of another color, religion, or background; to one who does not know the Christ of Christmas; to one to whom you can remain anonymous."

Try this list — as I plan to do — and let me know what it did for your Christmas spirit!



Student Day at Christmas

BRUNSWICK, GA. — "Discovering Christ Through Bible Study" is the theme of Student Day at Christmas in local churches this year. Pierre Boulogne (left) reads the Bible before an early morning class at Brunswick (Ga.) College, where he is studying computer information technology. (Photo by Jim Veneman.)

Carlisle is director of missions for Kemper

Wayne Carlisle is the new director of missions for Kemper Baptist Association.



Carlisle

Since 1989, he has been pastor of Corinth Church, De Kalb, in Kemper County, where he and his wife, Carol, live. He is interim pastor there now and will work for Kemper Association full time at the end of January. There

are 14 churches in Kemper Association.

Carlisle, a native of Enterprise, Miss., was associate pastor of Westwood Church, Meridian, 1987-89. Prior to that he spent 23 years with the Mississippi Air National Guard and civil service as a computer operations supervisor.

Carlisle has attended Jones Community College and Mississippi State University, and he is enrolled in the Liberty Home Bible Institute.

Missionary news

Glenn and Pat Bien, Bangladesh. Address: Rt. 4, Box 149, Coldwater 38618. Telephone: 233-0227. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 2/91.

Charles and Nita Boudreaux, Guyana. Address: 107 Clinton, Blvd., D-2, Clinton 39056. Telephone: 924-9657. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 6/91.

John and Claudia Brown, Mozambique. Address: 919 Reeves Street, Jackson 39204. Telephone: 371-2344. Arrival: 9/90, departure: 3/91.

Rick and Nedra Carter, Argentina. Address: 108 South 17th Avenue, Hattiesburg 39401. Telephone: 582-3744. Arrival: 8/90, departure: 7/91.

Rachel Dubard, Liberia. Address: Rt. 1, Box 87, Carrollton 38917. Telephone: 237-6278. Arrival: 6/90, departure: 12/90.

Margaret Fairburn, Liberia. Address: c/o Mrs. Earl Skinner, Rt. 4, Box 249, Tylertown 39667. Telephone: 876-2729. Arrival: 6/90, departure: 2/91.

Paul and Hannah Gay, Ethiopia. Address: 1606 Pear Orchard Place, Jackson 39211. Telephone: 957-1394. Arrival: 8/90, departure: 7/91.

David and Gloria Glaze, Argentina. Address: 438 East First Street, Forest 39074. Telephone: 469-1069. Arrival: 8/90, departure: 2/91.

Eddie and Marilyn Graves, Chile. Address: 704 Ponderosa Drive, Starkville 39759. Telephone: 323-4216. Arrival: 11/90, departure: 6/91.

Asbury and Hope Martin, Argentina. Address: P. O. Box 933, Fulton 38843. Telephone: 862-7330. Arrival: 9/90, departure: 3/91.

Donald and Rose McCain, Portugal.

Address: 5107 Myrtel, Moss Point 39563. Telephone: 475-0362. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 6/91.

Dennis and Margaret McCall, Burundi. Address: 3331 Old Canton Road, Jackson 39216. Telephone: 366-7922. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 1/91.

John and Kathy McNair, Uruguay. Address: 107 Frederick Street, Brandon 39042. Telephone: 825-4023. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 12/90.

Dennis and Sherrie Meilstrup, Argentina. Address: 1621 65th Avenue, Meridian 39301. Telephone: 482-0976. Arrival: 6/90, departure: 6/91.

Susan Puckett, Taiwan. Address: Rt. 7, Box 3570, Columbus 39701. Telephone: 328-7638. Arrival: 5/90, departure: 3/91.

Michael and Annette Racey, Chile. Address: 2415 Carter Road, Biloxi 39531. Telephone: 388-1438. Arrival: 11/90, departure: 3/91.

Harry and Frances Raley, Taiwan. Address: 442 Cummins Street, Jackson 39204. Telephone: 371-6565. Arrival: 6/90, Retiring.

Charles and Mary Elizabeth Ray, Japan. Address: P. O. Box 332, Purvis 39475. Telephone: 794-2528. Retiring.

Erroll and Mary Simmons, Hungary. Address: 721 E. Northside Drive, Jackson 39206. Telephone: 362-6209. Arrival: 10/90, departure: 2/91.

Steve and Vidonia Smith, Argentina. Address: 27 Kimberly Drive, Laurel 39440. Telephone: 649-8843. Arrival: 6/90, departure: 6/91.

Roger and Penny Stacy, South Brazil. Address: 520 Magazine Street, Tupelo 38801. Telephone: 489-1692. Arrival: 7/90, departure: 6/91.



Volunteers work in Illinois

Seventeen men and boys from churches in Lee and Pontotoc counties worked three days (Nov. 1-3) in Galesburg, Ill., to prepare a school building for use as the new home of Illinois Baptist College. The college is in its second year of operation, and has recently purchased a surplus school building/grounds from the local school district as a permanent campus. Ten men from Friendship Church, near Ecru, and seven men and boys from E. Mt. Zion Church, near Baldwin, formed a team to clean the building, repair doors and windows, and determine other maintenance needs which can be fulfilled by follow-up work teams. The men from Friendship were Jimmy Russell (pastor), Bobby Joe Todd, Boyd Cornelius, Willie D. Inman, Gene York, Bilbo Russell, Rusty Cummings, David McCollum, Billy Tate, and Alan Russell. The team members from E. Mt. Zion were Ed Campbell (pastor), Jerry McBride, Tony Campbell, Tulon Peters, Jack Hancock, Cory Campbell, and Jackie Hancock.

Names in the news



Randolph Church, Randolph, has four generations of one family as members, actively serving in the choir. Pictured from left are Miss Kim Watts, Mrs. Diane Stokes, Mrs. Carolyn Barefield, and Mrs. Earnie Mae Lindsey. Bobby Cobb is pastor, Gerald Waldrop is minister of music.



Sunflower Church, recently honored two former members who now live in Indianola. Gertrude Townsend, center, received a certificate of appreciation for her 65 years of membership at Sunflower Church. W. J. Martin, right, was presented a resolution and plaque commending him for 59 years of membership, service as chairman of deacons and Sunday School teacher, and leader in the construction of the church sanctuary. Townsend and Martin are pictured with Lester Jeffers, pastor of Sunflower Church.

Fixed fund rate projected 8.8% for '91

DALLAS — The anticipated crediting rate for the Fixed Fund of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has been projected to be 8.8 percent for 1991.

Paul W. Powell, president, announced the number today after the Investment Division completed its analysis of Fixed Fund assets and prospects for new investments in the coming months.

In December 1989 the expected rate of earnings for 1990 was pegged at 8.9 percent, and earnings have been posted each month to fulfill that goal.

The Annuity Board announces a rate each December for the coming year to assist retirement plan members in their decisions on allocation of contributions and accumulations.

Powell said, "I am delighted that in a period of expected downward trends in interest rates we are able to anticipate another excellent year for our members."

The Fixed Fund has invested assets of more than a billion dollars in guaranteed investment contracts issued by major insurance companies, bank investment contracts and related deposit products issued by commercial banks, and high-quality money market investments.

Though the Fixed Fund earnings rate is not guaranteed, the investments tend to be of such a conservative nature that the Board has never credited less than the preannounced rate.

Staff changes

John Wells is now serving as minister of music and youth for Second Church of Greenville. He previously served with Bunker Hill Church of Marion County.

Trinity Church, Laurel, has called A. Harrison Weger as pastor, effective Oct. 21. A native of Forest, he received his education at Mississippi College, William Carey College, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Calvary Church, Batesville.

Amaziah Church, Hickory Flat (Union County) has called Charlie Ransier as pastor, effective July 25. A native of 8 Mile, Ala., he received his education at Blue Mountain College. He previously served New Harmony Church, Union County.



Members of the Clarke College Baptist Student Union Council for the 1990-91 school year pictured, back row, left to right, are Ronnie Pannell, Gulfport; Jon Fancher, Alabaster, Ala.; Dan Woodard, Long Beach; Bret Prather, Canton; Lawrence White, BSU director; front row, left to right, Ray Files, Philadelphia; Angela Hebert, Memphis, Tenn.; and John Wayne Dowers, DeQuincy, La.



Winston Association recently held an "M" Night, with 277 in attendance at Evergreen Church. Pictured above, Hollis Bryant, left, of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's Cooperative Missions department, presented Director of Missions Jerry Stevens the Award of Excellence on behalf of the association for its resident membership of 4001-5000. Stevens was also honored with a surprise birthday party at "M" Night. The Gold Award was given to discipleship training directors Leroy Vowell of West End Church and J. D. Gregory of Harmony Church, which also received the Standard of Excellence Award for Discipleship Training.

Carey College receives full accreditation

William Carey College announces that full regional accreditation has been reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This reaffirmation removes the college from the public warning status it received in Dec. 1989.

"This has been an incredible team effort," said President Jim Edwards. "Our trustee board, Mississippi Baptist leadership, banks, community leaders, churches, and alumni have joined hands to help move us forward in a positive way. We still have many challenges ahead, but we've got a green light and a clear track to run on."

Cade Garrison has begun duties as western region manager of the ACTS television network, which is owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. The past seven years Garrison has held the position of director of media services for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. He is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. Garrison, 36, is an ordained minister.



Bobby Perry recently celebrated 10 years as director of missions in the Gulf Coast Association. Pictured with his wife, Sue, he was recognized by the association with a reception and a gift.

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Just for the Record

Thursday, December 20, 1990

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9



Randolph Church, Randolph, held a note burning recently for the debt retirement of the fellowship hall adjacent to the church. Those pictured burning the note are Bobby Cobb, pastor at Randolph, left, and Quay McGregor.



Concord Church, Ackerman (Choctaw) recently held a baby dedication service during its morning worship. Pictured, Pastor Ralph Cain, left, welcomes three new babies into the congregation. They are, from left, Melissa Carr with mother, Lynn, and father, Matt (not shown); Bailey Barksdale with parents Dee and John; Philip Brooks with parents Linda and Ronnie.



Linwood Church, Philadelphia recently held a GA recognition service with the theme, "Look Out World, Here We Come." Those recognized, pictured front row, left to right, are Felicia Boler, Amanda Moore, Nicole Nicholson, Shanna McCraw, back row, Karri McKinnon, Miranda Beckham, Sunny Singleton, and Krissy Thornton. Not pictured is Jody Barker. Leaders, from left, are Toni Breland, Pam Singleton, and Mary Nicholson.



The Brotherhood of Meadowood Church (Monroe) sponsored a mission trip to Calvary Baptist Church, Emerado, N.D. in July. Roger Dorsitt, former director of missions of Monroe Association, is pastor of Calvary Church. While there, the men led in revival prayer meetings and did needed repairs for the church. Pictured, left to right, kneeling, are participants Buddy Easter, Lee Goode, Billy Bowie, Dale Petty, standing, J. D. Stanford, Danny Stanford, Meadowood Pastor Hal Bates, Sam Royce, Howard Brannon, C. B. Peden, and Roger Wedekind.



The WMU of Arbor Grove Church, Houston, recently held its Fall Fiesta with the theme of a Hawaiian Luau. Pictured, Acteens, GAs, RAs, Brotherhood and WMU members attended the dinner of Hawaiian foods. Activities included a one-hour program of Hawaiian music by the local radio station, a devotional on "How to Worship" by Carol Woods, giving of leis, a "Womanless Beauty Review" won by Ryan Houser, in which 10 men participated, and games. Jackie Verrell is WMU director, Wayne King is pastor, Arbor Grove.

Gum Grove Church, Lincoln Association, will have a Christmas Celebration, Dec. 23, at 11 a.m. The sanctuary choir will present the musical "Tell Me the Story" followed by a presentation of "Tell the Good News" by the children's choir. There will be a Christmas message from the youth choir and the senior adult gospel glory singers will be sharing in the Christmas fellowship at 5:45 p.m. Roy Dixon is minister of music and Sammy J. McDonald III is pastor.

The choir of Terry Road Church, Jackson, will present its Christmas musical program, "He Came In Love," Dec. 23, at 7 p.m. James Netherland is director and Shirley Martin is coordinator. Terry Road Church will be fully equipped with the new Baptist Hymnal on the release date of March 14, 1991.

The Pearl Quartet will present a musical program at Terry Road Church, Jackson, Dec. 30, at 7 p.m.

The choir of Center Ridge Church, Yazoo City, will present "The Holy Birth" by Gordon Young, Dec. 23, at 6 p.m. The children's choir will also present "Love is the Reason" during the service. The choirs are under the direction of Stephen Bath and Bryan Abel is the pastor. A reception will be held following the service.

Liberty Church, Carrollton, recently held recognition services for the Rachael DuBard Royal Ambassador chapter. Roland Guerra Jr., earned the Lad I Shield and Discovery I Patch. Greg and Tommy McDonald earned the Page Shield, Hiker Patch, and Page Athletic Patch. Timothy Sullivan also earned these awards. Clay Scott earned the Page Shield and Hiker Patch. Nick Smith and Billy Sayle earned the Page Shield and Page Athletic Patch.

Burroughs to speak at breakfast

Esther Burroughs, assistant director, field staff, Evangelism Development Division of the Home Mission Board, will speak the the annual chaplains' breakfast at Shoney's, at Metrocenter, Jackson, at 7 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29.

Mrs. Burroughs is a native of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She is a graduate of Mars Hill Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist University. She is a lyricist of eight musicals with her composer husband, Bob. She authored two mission study books: Turning Your World Upside Down, 1984; and Empowered, 1990.

Reservations for the breakfast can be made through the Cooperative Missions Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 968-3800.

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How to become a Christian

Have you ever wondered what you must do to become a Christian or what you must do to be saved? The Bible has an answer that is easy to understand.

First, you must understand you need to be saved. The Bible says you need to be saved because you are a sinner. Your sin has a penalty. You cannot save yourself. The Bible says, "all have sinned," and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

Second, you must understand you can be saved. You can be saved because Christ died on the cross for your sins. The Bible says, "God demonstrated his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Third, you must understand what you need to do to be saved. The Bible says how you can be saved. Acts 3:19 says we must repent and turn away from our sins. But repentance alone is not enough. Ephesians 2:8 says that we must place our faith in Jesus Christ to be saved.

Now, you must act if you want to be saved. God is waiting for you to "want to" and to ask him to save you. The Bible says, "Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). If you are ready to trust Christ as your Savior and Lord, invite Christ into your heart right now by praying to him. You may word your own prayer or use the prayer printed here. The important thing is that the prayer is sincere and personal.

"Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know you died for my sins. Right now I invite you into my heart to be my Savior and Lord. I willingly turn from my sin and give my life to you. Thank you for saving me."

Welcome to God's family. You have just made the greatest decision of your life. Tell a pastor or another Christian friend about your decision as soon as possible. (Adult Sunday School quarterly, BSSB)

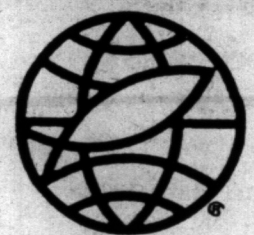
Revival results

First Church, Richland (Rankin): Nov. 4-7; Angel Martinez, Ft. Smith, Ark., evangelist; Graham Smith, Jackson, music; 19 professions of faith; Allen H. Stephens, pastor.

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Worshipping the King in humility and faith

By Jim Smith
Matthew 2:1-12

We should not be surprised to find wise men (from outside of Israel) coming to worship Jesus. God's promise to Abraham was to make him a mighty people through whom all the world would be blessed. He did not promise to be their God, exclusively. It has long been debated who these wise men may have been. It is possible that they were "magi," learned men of Persia or Babylon who were well-versed in the science and medicine of the day. They were probably astronomers who studied the skies and saw the strange star in the east. We are not sure how God revealed to them that the star was associated with his Son's birth, but he knew that God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod after worshipping Jesus. One of reverence for whatever revelation they received they traveled a great distance to show respect, reverence, love, and veneration for the child who had been born in a manger.



Smith

LIFE AND WORK

Seeking the King of the Jews, they journeyed to Jerusalem, the worship and political center of Judea. Expecting to find the newborn king there, they instead encountered Herod the Great. Herod was brilliant, evil, and ruthless. He was only part Jew and from Idumaea (Edom). He was in favor with Caesar Augustus, having escaped the destruction which befell Antony and Cleopatra whom he aided in their attempted break from Rome. He was mentally disturbed (reportedly dying from syphilis) and fearing he would be assassinated and the throne taken from him, he trusted no one. He went so far as to kill his wife, two sons, two brothers-in-law, and countless others he suspected of treason.

The wise men thought to find the Messiah in Jerusalem but King Herod and the priests were completely surprised by their arrival. Arousing Herod's obsession with treason and assassination, they soon had access to all available information. They learned from the priests and scribes that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem.

The wise men left in search of the Messiah.

It is curious that the Jews did not go with them, as they had spent years looking for the Messiah. It is possible that due to their arrogance they believed his coming would be revealed to them alone, and if not exclusively, certainly first. It is also probable that Herod forbade anyone to accompany them as he hoped to receive a report upon their return.

Herod's interest had been aroused and he met secretly with the wise men to learn when they first saw the star (so he could gauge the age of the child). He then asked them to find the child, return, and tell him so he could also go and worship him. Many people, like Herod, pretend to worship God or have the desire to serve him, when their only real desire is to serve their own selfish interests. Just as Herod, many seek to benefit their causes, not to come humbly and reverently before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Leaving Jerusalem, the wise men again observed the star and followed after it. The fact that they were very glad to see the star again may indicate that while they were in Jerusalem they lost its guidance for a period of time. When the star stood over the house that held the child, they were exceedingly glad. Their quest was over. Their faith had been rewarded. The Messiah had been revealed to them instead of

to the priests who were inattentive to any revelation by God even though they had knowledge of the Scripture. He was revealed to the wise men who came in simple faith instead of to an evil king who only sought his death.

The wise men responded in worship, falling down in humility before Jesus and his mother, giving respect and reverence to him even though he was only a child. They also gave of their treasures, precious gifts and offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Homage was paid to the King. Worship was effected in their faith response to the revelation, in their commitment to the quest, in their adoration of the child, in the humility of their spirits, and in the giving of precious gifts to the revealed King of Kings.

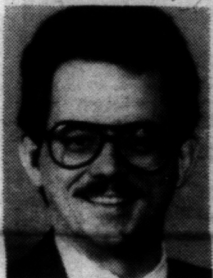
How do we worship him today? What can we learn from the examples of the wise men? Is the way we worship him today the "only" way we can worship him? What defines worship in our society? During this season of celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, maybe we should explore our motives and other possibilities for worship. Remember, "Wise men still seek Jesus!"

May God bless and keep you and yours.
Smith is pastor, Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian.

The shepherd who shows the real meaning of Christmas

By Bob Rogers
Luke 2:8-12, John 10:11-18

Hark! Do you hear what I hear? Do you see what I see? Twelve drummers drumming "Jingle Bell Rock" while the merchants deck the malls with pictures of Rudolph running over grandma. Are you dreaming of chestnuts roasting in Frosty's winter wonderland and Santa Claus coming to town? The profiteering prophets of a Christless Christmas have so dulled our senses to the real meaning of Christmas that millions of people have become like aimless sheep, wandering into a ravine of debt and despair without a shepherd to show them the way. Did I mention a shepherd? This Sunday's lesson, Luke 2:8-12, and John 10:10-11-18, introduces us to the one who can guide us with his staff through the maze of Christmas.



Rogers

Our lesson begins and ends with shepherds. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord

UNIFORM

came upon them . . ." (Luke 2:8-9). Shepherds were considered no better than thieves by the Jews. Since their occupation kept them in the fields and out of the synagogues on the Sabbath, they were also religious outcasts. That the angel would appear to shepherds showed that his message was truly "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (vs. 10). The good news was that the long awaited Messiah had been born: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (vs. 11). Christ is the Greek for the Hebrew "Messiah." The Messiah was the expected Savior of Israel who was to be a descendant of David and to be born in Bethlehem, David's hometown (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:6).

Years later, when Christ was a man, he spoke words about shepherds that showed the real meaning of Christmas. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep" (John 10:11). In the Old Testament, God is described as a shepherd to his people. Psalm 23:1 says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Psalm 100:3 says, "we are his

people, and the sheep of his pasture." As we studied several weeks ago, Jeremiah 34:2-3 warns against those false shepherds who feed themselves "but feed not the flock." Jesus also warned against the hired sheep watcher who does not own the sheep, because when the wolf comes, the hired shepherd flees and the sheep are caught and scattered (vs. 12). Today the false shepherds tell us that Christmas is a vacation from work, a time to spend with family, and a time for children. While all of that is part of Christmas, it becomes the central part of Christmas for many sheep who find no lasting direction in such a Christmas. All they find is a headache and a stack of bills when it is all over.

Unlike those who want to be our shepherds for their own profit, Jesus wants to be our shepherd and savior because he cares for us. He cares so much that he says, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (vs. 17). This is the purpose of Christmas. Christ came in a manger to live among us and to nail our sins with his body to the cross and leave behind the sting of death in the empty tomb. All of this he offers to those who will come into his sheep-fold. As the angel said, he was born to be our savior. As Christ said, he came to guide our lives as

our shepherd.

Notice one more thing. Jesus said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring . . ." (vs. 16). The other sheep are those who have not yet heard of Christ. The angel said that the good news is for "all people." Thus Christmas is to be shared. There is no more appropriate time for us to give Christ a birthday gift by giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

This Christmas, slow down from the mad rush long enough to ponder the purpose of the holiday. Remember the angel's announcement to the shepherds that God became one of us in Christ. And when you hear about the shepherds, remember that Christ is the greatest shepherd of all.

Questions to consider:

1. Look at your Christmas albums. What songs are about the real meaning of Christmas?
2. Think about your decorations and planned activities this holiday season. Which ones are Christ-centered?
3. Have you accepted Christ as your savior and shepherd? Are you telling others about him?

Rogers is pastor, Calvary Church, Gloster.

The birth of Jesus brings God to earth

By Lannie Wilbourn
Luke 1:30-31; 2:1-14

There is an old fable about a mouse and an elephant. The elephant was splashing around in a river while a mouse perched on the sandy shore. The mouse was disturbed by something, but the elephant was thoroughly enjoying himself. The mouse yelled at the elephant, "Come out of the water at once." The elephant laughed and asked, "Why should I come out?" The mouse was not about to be humiliated by this mountain of flesh. He continued to yell. The elephant realized that if he wanted any peace he would have to come out of the water. Slowly he lumbered out of the water and stood towering over the mouse. "Now, why did you ask me to come out of the water?" The mouse looked up defiantly and said, "I wanted to see if you were wearing my bathing suit."



Wilbourn

It is easier to understand how an elephant could wear a mouse's bathing suit than to understand the awesome mystery of the incarnation of God at Bethlehem. God became a baby! W. D. Mills said, "God cast aside the great shield of his omnipotence; he laid his sword of lightning with which he could cleave apart a galaxy; he put aside his robe, woven

BIBLE BOOK

of a thousand bright suns, and stepped down from his throne of stars to enter our earthly race, a baby."

Gabriel was the name of the angel sent by God to tell Mary the good news. She was to name the miracle child "Jesus." The name was common in and out of Palestine then. It was from the Hebrew "Joshua," the oldest name containing the divine name "Yahweh." Joshua was the leader of the Israelites when they conquered Canaan. Jesus, "Savior," would be the name of the Son of God, the pioneer and perfecter of faith in the Father. In Exodus 3 Moses asked God in the burning bush what name he would use when telling the Hebrew slaves of his mission. God gave him his eternal name, "I AM."

angel choir announced to the shepherds that a Savior was born. The parable of the three lost things in Luke 15 reveals Jesus as the Savior of lost sinners. Angels and shepherds alike rejoiced that God in the flesh lay in the manger at Bethlehem, with a name. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Our Father . . . hallowed be your name."

When the announcements first went out, there were responses by the recipients. Mary was a peasant girl. But she praised God and submitted her life to his purposes. Shepherds

got snubbed by the "better people" of society. But they ran from their hillside sheep pen to worship the Savior. God got a name that has meaning for every man, Savior.

Instead of looking for celestial beings with wings to bear the message of Christmas to us, we can look around and "entertain angels unaware." God sends messengers to tell us again of the gift of salvation. C. Roy Angell told the story of a college friend named Paul who got a new car for Christmas. His brother gave it to him. On Christmas Eve, when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. "Is this your car, mister?" he asked. Paul nodded, "My brother gave it to me for Christmas." The boy was amazed. "You mean your brother gave it to you, and it didn't cost you nothing? Boy, I wish . . ." As he hesitated Paul assumed he would finish with, "I wish I had a brother like that." Instead, the urchin said, "I wish . . . I wish I could be a brother like that." Paul looked at the boy. This time he was amazed, but he offered the boy a ride. After they had ridden a short distance, the lad asked, "Mister, would

you mind driving in front of my house?" Paul smiled. He assumed the boy wanted to be seen in the big car. But he was wrong again.

"Please stop by those steps, mister," the boy begged. He was out of the car and up the steps as quick as a mouse. Paul heard the door slam twice and saw the boy coming down the steps carefully. He was carrying a smaller boy, his brother, crippled by polio. He stopped at the sidewalk, set his brother down, and excitedly said, "There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas, and it didn't cost him a cent. And someday I'm gonna give you one just like it. Then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the store windows." Paul got out, lifted the crippled boy and the older brother into the car and drove past all the store windows, slowly. He learned that there really is more joy in giving than in receiving.

God is the giver. We are the receivers of the best gift ever given, the Savior whose name was announced by angels, Jesus!

Wilbourn is pastor, Pinelake Church, Brandon.

Mississippi Baptist activities

Dec. 27-28 Youth Evangelism Conference; Mississippi College; 1 p.m., 27th-3:30 p.m., 28th (EVAN)

THE VILLAGE VIEW

The Baptist Children's Village

Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

ACCREDITED

P. O. Box 27,
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242



Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of the Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hope-fully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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October 31, 1990

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Nov. 1, 1990 -
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1990 HOLIDAY FUND GOAL

\$270,000.00

RECEIVED THUS FAR

\$137,325.53

If you have not mailed your Christmas gift yet, you
may send it to:

The Baptist Children's Village

P. O. Box 27

Clinton, MS 39060-0027

For those friends who have already sent your
Christmas gift —

THANK YOU . . .

for making this a Merry Christmas for so many
boys and girls at The Village.



Pictured are Ronny Robinson, Executive Director of The Baptist Children's Village, the children of The Village's Deanash Group Home in Stone County and Mr. Bobby Chain who is President and Chief Executive Officer of Futurevision. To the children's delight Mr. Chain recently donated cable service to our Deanash Group Home.

HONORS

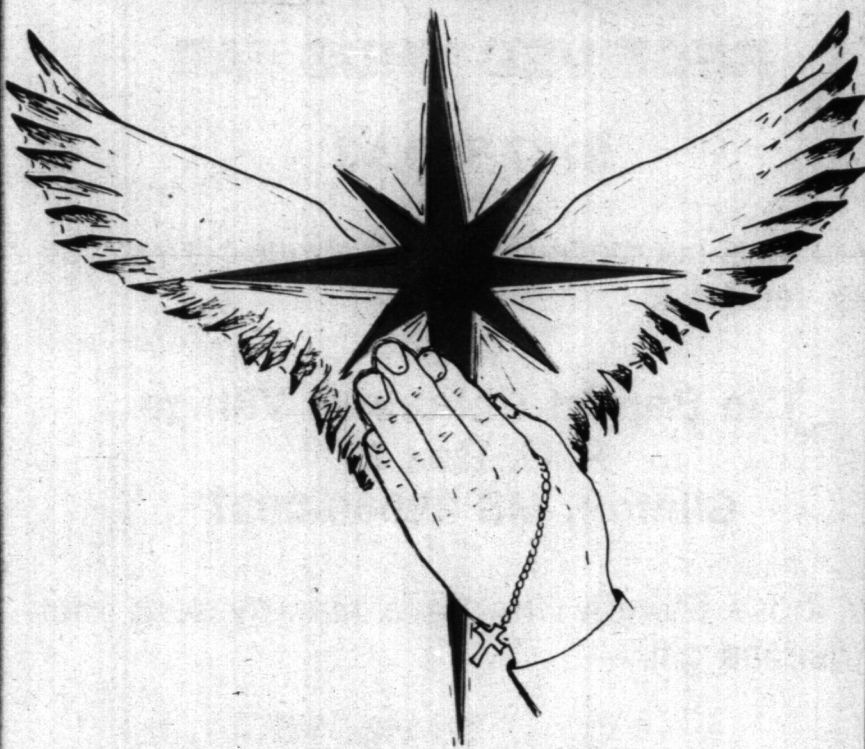
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(To be continued)

GIVE THANKS THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON.



JESUS SAVES!

—Drawing by Michelle Weaver, Clinton

capsules

CONSERVING ENERGY IN PLACES OF WORSHIP: a pamphlet with helpful hints on how to save on energy, lighting, flood lighting, security, and insulation. Available by writing to Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development, Attention: Marilyn Clark, 510 George St., Jackson, MS 39202.

LEAKE ASSOCIATION has passed a resolution concerning the Cooperative Program, expressing affirmation for the support of 8,000 home and foreign missionaries and urging churches to remain loyal to the Cooperative Program. Last year, 33 of the 34 churches contributed to associational missions and the Cooperative Program. Michael Weeks is the director of missions.

BOLIVIANS PUSH FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM — LA PAZ, Bolivia (EP) — Evangelicals in Bolivia have launched a campaign to amend the constitution to allow for separation of church and state and to end government restrictions on religious activity, according to a news report in the October issue of *Christianity Today*. Sponsors of such an amendment hope to delete a section of the constitution, which, in its current form, reads: "The state recognizes and sustains the Apostolic and Roman Catholic religion," and established that "the state guarantees and protects the public exercise of all religious worship."

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY Library and Archives recently received a grant for \$9,809 from the New York State Discretionary Grant Program from the Conservation/Preservation of Library Research Materials in its collection of rare Bibles and Scriptures.

RARE BOOK DONATED — Mrs. Merle Walker Fields, a member of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, has given a rare book to the Southern Baptist Library and Archives in Nashville in memory of her father, the late George K. Walker of Smithdale, who for many years was an active member of the Mars Hill Church, Amite County. According to Mrs. Pat Brown, librarian at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, *The English Bible: How Did We Get It?*, Volume I, by Mrs. C. S. Pendleton completes the two volume set since the library already had Volume II. This book was copyrighted in 1859 and produced by the Sunday School Board, SBC.

The book was used by Walker when he taught at Mars Hill Church.

RICHMOND, Va. — JULIAN H. PENTECOST, editor and business manager of the *Religious Herald*, has announced plans to retire as of June 30, 1992. Pentecost, who became editor of the Virginia Baptist newsjournal in 1970, made the announcement Dec. 4 during a regular meeting of the *Herald's* board of trustees.

Prior to assuming the editorship of the *Herald*, he was pastor of three Virginia Baptist churches: West End, Suffolk, 1953-57; First, Waynesboro, 1957-66; and Grace, Richmond, 1966-70.

Afghanistan, where 16.5 million people live, and 99 percent is Muslim. The country is five times the size of Mississippi but only two of every 100 acres in the country can be farmed. Estimates are that 13.7 million Afghans have never heard the gospel.

Lottie Moon at work

Holy Spirit, Ralph Bethea keep rapid pace in Mombasa

By Craig Bird

MOMBASA, Kenya — Ralph Bethea grins slowly, and often. Everything else he does at full speed — and even more often.

He even has to sleep in a hurry because most nights there are only a handful of hours between the last prayer meeting, witnessing opportunity or planning session and the first phone call or knock on the door. Mombasa, Kenya, is a busy place spiritually.

"I'd pay Southern Baptists to be a missionary in here right now," says Bethea, just beginning his second term as a church developer. "What the Holy Spirit is doing here is so exciting I couldn't stand to be anywhere else."

Bethea is referring to an openness to the gospel that apparently has turned this 1,000-year-old coastal city into the most responsive Muslim stronghold in the world.

Before last summer's four-week coastal crusade, Bethea talked of 10,000 baptisms and more than 100 new churches (most of them preaching points or house churches and many others not yet affiliated with the Mombasa Baptist Association) in the past five years in a city of 500,000. During the crusades, 35,515 more people signed spiritual commitment cards in Mombasa.

But Bethea doesn't think the revival is an example of spontaneous generation. "Christians have been working and praying to win Mombasa to Jesus for decades," he points out.

"Look at the folks who have been faithful so many years and who are still on the field like Jim and Jenny Musen, Clay and Pat Coursey, Louis and Jo Scales, Ed and Mary Horton, Charles and Laverne Tope, Jimmy and Peggy Hooten, and more."

By any count, the number of professions of faith, baptisms and church starts push the statistics into the unbelievable range. Last Easter just 10 churches in Mombasa baptized

more than 1,000 new believers in the Indian Ocean.

Such results keep a constant stream of American volunteers flowing to Mombasa to share in the work and excitement. But if any of them arrive thinking they are bringing God with them they soon learn he is alive and well in Mombasa and letting them take part in what he is doing through national believers.

"These Kenyan Christians are something else," Bethea agrees. "They have a zeal for lost souls and a confidence in the power of God that scares me sometimes." Obstacles that appear to be permanent — Muslim politicians with power over granting plots for church buildings; hostile neighborhoods populated by people vowing to burn down any church built in their area; containers used for temporary churches stolen to be repainted and resold — all meet with the same response.

"They say, 'Let's pray until we get God's answer on this,'" Bethea explains. "I'll be in a hurry to see what I can do to solve the problem, and they'll say, 'Sit down, God hasn't shown us what to do. When he does, we'll do it.'" Other times, in confrontations with Muslims, the Kenyans don't hesitate to announce publicly that the God they serve is stronger than any opposition — be it political obstruction or physical illness.

"They get saved and read the book of Acts and figure it applies to them right now," Bethea said.

Baptists in Mombasa are not specifically targeting Muslims. In fact, the majority of the new Christians are from African traditional religions or nominal Christian backgrounds. But still, Bethea thinks as many as 20 percent of the converts come out of Islam — which computes into incredible response.

Bethea feels a key to the whole Mombasa story is the lead role played

by nationals at all levels. The evangelization and church starts are almost totally indigenous.

Another important factor is the religious freedom enjoyed in Kenya. There may not be another major Muslim city in the world where Christians are as unhampered.

Bethea knows that not everyone who prays to receive Jesus in public is sincere, "but I really believe two-thirds of those who make professions of faith during door-to-door efforts and 30 percent of those from the ferry 'stick,'" he says.

While Bethea, whose parents had a 30-year span as Southern Baptist missionaries in Indonesia, India, Tanzania, and Kenya, talks like he is simply an enthusiastic observer, a look at his day shows otherwise. A friend once sympathized with Linda Bethea on the running her husband was doing keeping watch over 14 teams of nationals and volunteers, "plus all his unscheduled trips." Replied Linda: "Life with Ralph Bethea is unscheduled."

"Are you walking with Jesus?" is his most-used question. His biggest complaint: "I'm getting old. I have to sleep two or three hours after a church invites me to an all-night prayer meeting."

One day last April was typical. A woman stopped him as he walked from the home of a converted Muslim he had visited. But he had barely begun to witness when she said, "I know all of that. I'm tired of all the sin in my life. I want to be saved now."

Back at his car, parked 20 yards from a mosque, he met three elderly men playing cards. All prayed to accept Jesus. Later, on the ferry, he shared with a white-turbaned man who made a profession of faith — and showed up the next day where Bethea told him a baptism would be held. At a stop to buy a soft drink, four young men asked if he were a Christian and wanted to debate.

They spent 20 minutes asking apparently sincere questions. "None of them were saved, but that helped get them ready for later," he comments.

Each time, with a shake of his head, he notes, "Isn't it great what the Holy Spirit is doing?"

Bird writes for FMB.



SHARING HIS FAITH Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Bethea talks with a man about his faith at Uzima, Kenya, while Alfred Nzai, center, pastor of Uzima Baptist Church, listens. Bethea is known for being unable to go from point A to point B without an incredible number of unplanned stops in between. Chance meetings with a pastor who needs encouraging, or with a stranger to whom Bethea feels led to witness, make sure he seldom arrives anywhere on time. (FMB Photo by Warren Johnson)

Baptist Record

005-OTM
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12-20

December 20, 1990

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